

Minutes of the East Greenwich School Committee

Tuesday, January 18, 2011

Hanaford School

200 Middle Road

East Greenwich, RI 02818

ANY ITEMS ON THE AGENDA MAY BE SUBJECT TO A VOTE

5:50p.m. Executive Session, Vote to go into executive session for discussion and/or action regarding those items of business exempt from open meetings under General Laws of Rhode Island 42-46-5 (a) (1) (a) (2) and (a) (8) Collective Bargaining-Paraprofessional Contract and Custodial Contract , Possible Litigation with SORICO, Student Hearing, and Recommendation of Interim EGHS Principal

The regular session of the East Greenwich School Committee was called to order in the Hanaford School Cafeteria at 7:11p.m. by School Committee Chair Dr. Deidre Gifford. Those in attendance were Dr. Deidre Gifford, Chair; Mr. Robert Durant, Vice-Chair; Mrs. Mary Ellen Winters; Mr. David Green; Mr. Jack Sommer; Mrs. Susan Records, and Mr. Paul Martin. Superintendent Dr. Victor Mercurio, Director of Student Services Mrs. Paula Dillion, Director of Administration Mrs. Maryanne Crawford (arrived 5:58p.m.), and Attorney Matthew Oliverio (arrived 5:55p.m.) were also in attendance.

7:11p.m. Regular Meeting

I. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

The meeting commenced with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

II. Public Comments

Mrs. Heather Larkin asked questions regarding the payment of the floor analysis and the useful life of Meadowbrook. Mrs. Kristin Wheeler asked questions about the safety and health of students and staff at Meadowbrook and brought up the concern of mold in the library. Mr. Tony Wheeler discussed the investment of fixing Meadowbrook now for current and future students and the investment in the health and well-being of students and staff. Mrs. Larkin also asked about the approved bond money (\$1.6 million) and whether the School Committee is obligated to spend it at Meadowbrook. Mr. David Gecawich discussed the history of Meadowbrook noting water issues which led to a new floor in 1999. He expressed concerns over a partial fix and the monitoring of safety. Dr. Gifford noted there seems to be a perception that the Committee has decided on a fix for Meadowbrook, which is not the case. The School Committee needs to go through a formal process which includes a presentation to the Town Council once the Committee votes on a recommendation. Mr. Green noted the Meadowbrook roof was not included in the bond and the roof has gone from fair to poor at Meadowbrook and Frenchtown. The Meadowbrook floor needs to be considered a separate issue and equality needs to be shown in regards to the Meadowbrook, Frenchtown, and EGHS roofs. He noted that voters voted for the full fix of the flooring at Meadowbrook and

he would like to represent the will of the voters. Mrs. Mary Christian also discussed Meadowbrook and questioned the amount of funds that are given to the district by RIDE. She also noted the importance of NEASC recommendations. Dr. Gifford thanked the public for their input, emails, and calls. Mrs. Winters reiterated the Building Committee recommendations: the full fix at Meadowbrook which will fix the floor, roof, balance the air, and the HVAC at a cost of \$4million, the partial fix (roof, balance the air, remove the tubes, and leave the floor), or the last option which is to maintain the floors and see what happens. Mrs. Winters noted that Meadowbrook was built in 1968 and has gone through multiple fixes between 1968-2001. The last fix to the floor was about 10 years ago and was supposed to be permanent. Dr. Gifford noted SGH said the asbestos does not pose a problem unless it is disrupted. The Committee is concerned about mold present in the library and takes all concerns seriously. To date, there is no evidence of health problems in students or staff. Mr. Durant noted if there were proven health and safety issues, this would make the Meadowbrook fix a different issue. The Committee is doing its due diligence and there is no guarantee that any fix will be permanent. Mr. Martin noted when the last fix was done to the floor; there were no in-depth studies such as the SGH study or comprehensive information from a Building Committee.

III. Approval of Minutes

a. Regular and Executive Session for January 4, 2011

On a motion by Mr. Green and seconded by Mrs. Winters, the regular and executive session minutes of January 4, 2011 were unanimously

approved with Mr. Martin abstaining. Language revisions were made in VII (a) and (c) regarding the MOU of Understanding for the Field's Use and the Concession Stand.

b. Regular and Executive Session for December 15, 2010-Joint meeting with Town Council

On a motion by Mr. Green and seconded by Mrs. Winters, the regular and executive session minutes of the Joint meeting with Town Council on December 15, 2010 were unanimously approved with Mr. Durant abstaining.

IV. Recognitions

EGHS All- State recipients were recognized for Boys' Soccer, Girls' All State Field Hockey, Girls' Soccer, and Girls' Tennis.

V. Superintendent's Report

Mr. John Gray is the Superintendent's recommendation for EGHS interim principal. The position will be vacant at the end of the semester. Mr. Gray spent 27 years in Barrington as a high school principal and has significant experience with NEASC as a host site and as a chair. The permanent position will be posted this week on SchoolSpring and will also be posted in the Providence Journal this weekend. The goal is to hire a principal by April 1, 2011 with a starting date of July 1, 2011. Mr. Martin questioned whether the School Committee needs to vote on this recommendation based on the past hiring of the current interim principal. Dr. Mercurio will check the minutes of that hiring and if the position was previously voted on, this position will also be voted on at the next School Committee meeting.

Dr. Mercurio noted the ad-hoc committee to revise the Student Code of Conduct met for the first time this week. The Charge was disseminated and a meeting schedule was set up. Dr. Mercurio also congratulated the Cole students and their teacher, Mr. Garneau, for placing tenth in the Robotics competition. Mr. Durant also congratulated grade 5 Eldredge students who participated.

The Superintendent has received the new RIDE evaluation instrument for teachers. RIDE has begun holding public forums to discuss the tiered diploma system. The next forum is tomorrow night at South Kingstown High School and January 24, 2011 at North Kingstown High School. Tomorrow Dr. Mercurio will meet with EGHS PTG members.

VI. Action Items

a. Appointments:

Paul Records, Asst. Coach, Girls' EGHS Basketball

On a motion by Mrs. Winters, which was seconded by Mr. Durant, the appointment was unanimously approved with Mrs. Records abstaining. This position is an interim appointment for the remainder of the season.

Matthew Merin, Mentor Program, Grant-funded position

On a motion by Mr. Durant, which was seconded by Mrs. Winters, the appointment was unanimously approved.

b. Parental leave-Bethany Friel

On a motion by Mr. Durant, which was seconded by Mrs. Winters, the parental leave was unanimously approved with Mr. Green abstaining.

c. Field trip, Hanaford, Grade 6, Nature's Classroom in Charlton, MA, March 21-23, 2011

On a motion by Mr. Martin, which was seconded by Mr. Durant, the Field Trip to Nature's Classroom was unanimously approved by the Committee.

d. Field trip, Eldredge, Grade 6, Nature's Classroom in Charlton, MA, March 23-25, 2011

On a motion by Mr. Martin, which was seconded by Mr. Durant, the Field Trip to Nature's Classroom was unanimously approved by the Committee.

e. Building Committee recommendations:

ESCO-Energy contract

Mr. Henry Kates, of the Finance Committee, discussed the Schneider Electric proposal, which was presented to the Finance Committee on January 6, 2011. He discussed three potential projects with a base project costing approximately \$1.4 million, and expanded projects costing from \$2.8 million to \$2.9 million. Mr. Kates discussed the financial aspects of the ESCO proposal noting risks and benefits and stated the program is a budget neutral project. He explained how an ESCO works and noted the project is usually financed through a lease program with RIHBEC over 15 years with the ESCO contractor guaranteeing savings to the district. If there is a shortfall, the contractor will write a check to the district for the difference. Two sources of rebates may also be available from National Grid and RIDE. Dr. Gifford would like the final audit from Schneider Electric and Mrs. Crawford will check to see if we paid for it. Mr. Durant noted

there is an approved list of vendors for ESCO projects and Schneider is on the list. Mr. Kates noted that annual maintenance fees can be negotiated and SBS can be asked for assistance. A construction lawyer and an individual with a financial background would be needed to review any recommended proposal. Mrs. Winters asked Mr. Gee if the town has looked into ESCO and he recalls a presentation being made to the town, but is unsure of the status.

EGHS Technology upgrades and Library Media upgrades

Dr. Mercurio discussed recommendations for library media upgrades, technology infrastructure, and classroom enhancements. The School Committee was initially given these recommendations at the January 4, 2011 meeting. Dr. Mercurio discussed the current conditions of the library and infrastructure noting the “current reality” and “proposed solutions” and their impact on teaching and learning. The Committee would like to see the renovations that SMMA completed at a high school in Bedford, Massachusetts which is a renovation in similar proportion to EGHS. Mr. Sommer would like to explore the possibility of each student having their own I-PAD or laptop. Mr. Durant noted the Cole students should move seamlessly to EGHS having comparable technology. He noted he is not sold on the library upgrades at this time, but noted technology and the Meadowbrook roof is top priority. Mrs. Records also stated technology and the Meadowbrook roof are priorities. Dr. Gifford also noted the air balance issues are also a priority. Mr. Green stated the Meadowbrook roof needs to be done along with the air balancing. He noted money

should be set aside for the floor if the roof and air balancing fixes do not take care of the moisture. In discussing the library upgrades, Mrs. Harris noted the library closes at 2:30p.m. each day giving students' only a half hour to use it. She also noted the town library has undergone major improvements and questioned whether the EGHS library needs the update and noted it would be better to have the building Wi-Fi friendly. Mr. Martin was outraged to hear the library closes at 2:30p.m. each day. Dr. Mercurio discussed the NEASC visit ten years ago and their recommendation to upgrade the library and institute bar coding. Dr. Gifford stated the School Committee is in consensus regarding fixing the EGHS and Frenchtown roofs. The Committee is concerned about the Meadowbrook roof, air flow, and the floor situation. SBS, SMMA, and SGH are looking at possible solutions regarding the asbestos tiles. There is also a question of timing and the disruption to education at Meadowbrook. After discussing the recommended library and technology upgrades, Mr. Durant made a motion to approve the EGHS technology upgrades and enhancements (not to exceed \$665,000). This motion was seconded by Mrs. Records. The vote was 6-1 with Mr. Martin voting against the motion. This recommendation will be presented to the Town Council for approval on January 31, 2011.

VII. Discussion Items

a. Middle School Transition

Ocean State Transit is scheduled to meet this Thursday at Cole to review traffic patterns. Mrs. Crawford will be speaking with Aramark tomorrow regarding transition. Cole is still on target to open after the

April vacation.

b. Budget Timeline

Budget workshops are being scheduled for the next two weeks at 6:00 at the EGHS library. Meadowbrook will be discussed again at the January 25 and possibly the January 27, 2011 budget meetings. Mrs. Crawford will forward budget information by the end of the week.

c. National School Board Conference

Mr. Martin discussed the upcoming National School Board Conference which will take place in San Francisco, California. He noted the conferences are worthwhile for School Committee members and the Superintendent.

VIII. School Committee Concerns

Mr. Martin questioned the placing of items on the agenda and also asked if the vice-chair can be involved in drafting the agenda.

X. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Durant which was seconded by Mrs. Winters, the meeting was adjourned at 9:29p.m.

Individuals with disabilities, who require assistance or special arrangements to participate in the meeting, please contact Christine DiMeglio 401 398-1201. We request you provide a 48-hour notice so that the proper arrangements may be made.